

Ways God May Reveal His Will, Part 2 - Acts 21:5-8 – June 28th, 2009

- This is pt 2 of a series titled; "Ways God May Reveal His Will." Woven into the fabric of the text before us, are ways to know God's will.
- If you were to ask me what the most commonly asked questions amongst Christians is, it would be; "How do I know what God's will is?"
- The Apostle Paul will rise from the pages of scripture, and show us how it is, and the way it is, that God may show us what His will is.

1. Through difficulty and hardship (Verses 1-3)

- The departure was difficult when they tore themselves away from the Ephesian elders, knowing they would never see them again.
- Then the journey to Tyre was riddled with uncertainty, and there were no "cruise ship creature comforts" because it was a cargo ship.
- God's will may be that we tear ourselves away from loved ones and those creature comforts for what may be riddled with uncertainty.

2. Through the Spirit's urging (Verse 4)

- We're told that the disciples they stayed with while the ship was unloaded; "through the Spirit ...urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.
- We went into great detail as to whether or not it was God's will Paul go and if the Holy Spirit was forbidding Paul from going.
- If there's a take away from this, it's this; God's will may not always be "Red-Sea Clear" if you will, and that's when we step out in faith.
- Suffice it to say, it's not really a matter of if Paul was in God's will as much as it is that God speaks to us "through the Spirit's urging."

3. Through corporate prayer (Verses 5-6)

5 But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. **All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray.** 6 After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

- v5 When their time was up they leave with the disciples, who bring their wives and children, then they get on their knees to pray together.
- v6 After this time of praying together as a group and as a family, they say good-bye to each other, then board the ship and head for home.
- I believe that God will reveal His will when we pray together as a family and as a church family to Him, because we pray differently.

4. Through loving fellowship (Verses 7-8)

7 We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. 8 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. v7 After their departure from Tyre, they land at Ptolemais, and greet the brothers there then end up staying with them for one day. v8 They then leave the next day and reach Caesarea where they stay at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven deacons.

- If find it quite interesting that Paul ends up staying with, of all people Philip, who is now living in the beautiful beach town of Caesarea.
- What makes this so fascinating is that Philip likely fled the persecution of the early Christians at the hand of one "Saul of Tarsus."
- What a small world. I think Paul and Philip have a mutual friend, and they may have actually met and known each other from before.

Acts 6:1-6 1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose **Stephen**, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also **Philip**, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. NIV

Acts 7:57-60 57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, **the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.** 59 **While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."** 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. NIV

- Bible commentators believe that not only was Saul there when Stephen was martyred, but that Saul approved Stephen being martyred.
- All these years later, Saul, now Paul and Philip are in fellowship together because of the love of Christ they share as brothers in Christ.

- How does this loving fellowship Paul and Philip have apply to me knowing what God's will is for my life? I'm so glad you asked?
- In the next verse, which we'll get to, Lord willing, next week, we're going to be introduced to Philip's four daughters who prophesied.
- God speaks to Paul through the fellowship in Philip's home where he stays for several days. God reveals His will through others.

Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety. NKJV

Proverbs 15:22 Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed. RSV

2 Peter 3:9b [God is] not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. KJV